

# Foster Parents

## Changing Lives One Child at a Time

April 2006



### Make Your Voice Heard for Children in Foster Care

Mental Health Transformation Project; Partnerships for Recovery and Resiliency. The State of Washington is a successful bidder in a Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Mental Health Transformation Grant. SAMHSA is a federal agency that drives mental health and substance abuse policy and grants. The planning process is underway and we would like to hear from Foster Parents about what is going well and what improvements in the mental health system you would like to see. There is a four question survey attached to the Foster Parent website if you are interested fill it out. More information about the Transformation Grant is at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/Mentalhealth/mhtsig.shtml>. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the survey and provide feedback.

### Community Aid Coalition Makes Quilts and Toys for Children

The Community Aid Coalition makes quilts and toys but most of all they make a difference. The prisoners at the Twin Rivers Unit of the Monroe Correctional Complex who are part of the coalition gathered in March to celebrate with the community partners with whom they work.

Approximately 10 non-profit groups from the community attended this gala and included St. Joseph's Baby Corner, Big Brothers Big Sisters Snohomish County, Boys and Girls Club Snohomish County, Families for Kids, Peace on the Streets for Kids on the Street, First Book Sno-King County Advisory Board, and Everett Gospel Mission.

Families for Kids (FFK) is one of the organizations that the prisoners make quilts and toys for. FFK distributes the toys and quilts to foster children and foster parents in our state. The coalition has donated hundreds of beautiful quilts and toys to foster families in recent years.

Nancy Underwood-Long of Families for Kids is the Volunteer Sponsor for the coalition. She told the group she "had never been involved in a more professional organization than the coalition."

Representatives of other organizations, such as Peace on the Streets for Kids on the Street and St. Joseph Baby Corner told how young people sleeping under bridges used the quilts and how babies are wrapped in them. Mayor Donna Walser of Monroe also thanked the prisoners for their work.

Other items that the coalition makes include beadwork, cross-stitch, and hand knit items, many made with a focus on kids.

### Disaster Preparedness Handbook 2005

This handbook is available at [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov). The handbook contains information on preparing for emergencies – from tips on preventing the spread of germs to a checklist of emergency supplies. Also included at the DOH website is information on Pandemic Influenza, Flu News, links to Public Health, Center for Disease Control, County Health Departments, and Government Health Information sites.

### Tax Information

As the deadline quickly approaches, many of us will do the mad dash to get our taxes completed. Children's Administration cannot give tax advice to foster parents or relative caregivers but we can direct you to where you may be able to get your questions answered. Below are links, which may be helpful to you as a foster parent. The IRS website is available for all individuals interested in securing an IRS definition on dependent claim for foster parents.

<http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=133298,00.html>

[http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/articles.cfm?issue\\_id=2001-03&article\\_id=241](http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/articles.cfm?issue_id=2001-03&article_id=241)

**Tax Season Assistance for Foster/Adoptive Parents and Kinship Caregivers**

## 2006 Annual Caregiver Conference is Looking for Talent!

The 2006 Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference is scheduled for September 17, 18 and 19 in Spokane. Do you have a foster child with a special talent for dance, singing, or art? Would they be interested in performing or having their work displayed at the Caregiver Conference? If yes, please call or email Barb Bofinger at (360) 902-7986 or boba300@dshs.wa.gov.

## Question / Answer Column

We often get questions from individuals that may be important to all caregivers. If you have a question, and think the answer would be information that would benefit other caregivers please contact Barb Bofinger at (360) 902-7986 or boba300@dshs.wa.gov and we can post it in the newsletter.

**Question:** My kids are from Pierce Co. but I live in Thurston County, why can't we transfer kids to a local therapist so we don't have to go back and forth?

**Answer:** Typically, children may receive treatment in the community in which they live. However, if the child has an established relationship with a health professional (mental or physical) then it may be in the best interests of the child to continue that relationship. In addition, some treatments are not available in all communities and so travel is required in order to access the most appropriate service. Talk with the child's social worker and health provider to see if a change in providers is appropriate.

## Get Connected!

Children's Administration does not release your name or address to the Foster Parent Association of Washington State (FPWS), local foster parent associations, YMCA of Greater Seattle or to Families for Kids (FFK). These agencies can provide support, information and referral, and key information to assist you in providing for the children in your care. We encourage you to contact each of these agencies and provide them with your information so that they can add you to their email and mailing list and you can then receive important information. Contact information for these agencies is:

**Foster Parent Association of Washington State:** [www.fpaws.org](http://www.fpaws.org) or 1-800-391-CARE (2273)

**Families for Kids (FFK):** [www.familiesforkids.org](http://www.familiesforkids.org) or 1-888-794-1794

**YMCA of Greater Seattle:** [whyfoster@seattleymca.org](mailto:whyfoster@seattleymca.org) or 1-800-760-5340

**Foster Care Resource Network** (Bremerton and Tacoma caregivers): 1-253-677-8122.

## Important Numbers

**Important numbers to know when you take care of children in foster care or are thinking about doing so:**

Statewide information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent: *Why Foster* statewide telephone line at 1-800-760-5340 or [whyfoster@seattleymca.org](mailto:whyfoster@seattleymca.org) Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Statewide information about receiving foster parent support: *Families for Kids:* 1-888-794-1784 or [www.familiesforkids.org](http://www.familiesforkids.org) Monday- Friday, 9:00 – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message. Receive a return call by the next business day.

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: *Foster Care Resource Network*, 1-253-677-8122. Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

General foster parent information for the state of Washington/FPAWS: *Foster Parent Association of Washington State*, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or [www.fpaws.org](http://www.fpaws.org) Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day. Seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: *Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team* (FIRST) 1-253-219-6782, Monday – Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

CA Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis Line and general support on licensing and case management questions not abuse or neglect: *Caregiver Support/Crisis Line:* 1-800-301-1868. Weeknights from 4:30 p.m. – 8:00 a.m./weekends and holidays, 24 hours per day.

*Family Help Line:* 1-800-932-HOPE or [www.parenttrust.org](http://www.parenttrust.org). The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington State. Last year, the Family Help Line received over 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

## Children's Administration Foster Parent Website and Foster Parent Training Website

For information about Foster Parenting: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

For information about Foster Parent Training: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve:(r) <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1>